

## **GOVERNOR JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM**

February 24, 2006

Hello, this is Governor Jennifer Granholm.

From gasoline for your car to natural gas and heating oil for your home, we all know that costs for energy have been steadily rising – and the higher they go this winter, the harder my administration is working to make sure all our citizens can afford to stay warm.

Our goal is to make sure that no Michigan household has to choose between heating and eating. And we're working to meet that goal in some critical ways.

First, in January, I asked the Michigan Public Service Commission to make \$25 million in additional home heating assistance available for citizens who are struggling to pay their energy bills.

This week the Commission announced that additional funding will go to organizations like The Heat and Warmth Fund, the Salvation Army and programs through the Michigan Department of Human Services to help our families across the state.

Second, we want to help raise awareness about the great organizations that are working to keep citizens safe this winter. That's why I declared February 19<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> "Keep Michigan Warm Week." And on the 25<sup>th</sup>, this Saturday, Community Action Agencies are holding "Walk for Warmth" fundraisers all across the state.

I encourage you to support this great cause that helps low-income families pay their heating bills this winter.

Third, we're also partnering with our Michigan utilities to help consumers.

In January, I announced the "Save Energy with Ease" program – a partnership between state government, Michigan's major utility providers and our state's Community Action Agencies to provide thousands of free programmable thermostats, home energy conservation kits and consumer education to Michigan residents.

I want to thank DTE Energy, Consumers Energy Company, Indiana Michigan Power Company and SEMCO Energy Gas Company for funding this initiative, which is already assisting five thousand Michigan residents.

Finally, I've with joined with a bi-partisan group of 28 governors in asking Congressional leaders to increase funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

The leadership in Washington has yet to act, but that's not stopping us in Michigan. We all know that it's cold – right now. And we want our citizens to stay safe and warm this winter.

If you or someone you know needs help paying their heating bill, please call the Michigan Public Service Commission toll free at 1-800-292-9555. An operator will help you get the information you need. You can also visit our state energy assistance Website at [www.michigan.gov/bewinterwise](http://www.michigan.gov/bewinterwise).

Thank you for listening.